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JUNE 27, 2025 | VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 14

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GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

Non-English speakers in DC shelters suffer from lack of translation. page 4

Left to right: Kiara Meza, Davyd Abreu and J, outside a SMYAL facility. Photo by Madi Koesler

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@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

Thank you Washtenaw County for funding through 2025 New Human Services Partnership

LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

On April 20 Groundcover News received official notification that this valued publication, which has been providing critical resources and entrepreneurial opportunities since 2010, was chosen to be one of ONLY eight organizations to receive Washtenaw County's 2025-2026 New Human Services Partnership Mini-Grant.

The goal of this grant program is to provide organizations like Groundcover — human services organizations that do not regularly have formal support from the government — with one-time funding to address the root causes of institutional inequity in Washtenaw County, specifically: Racism, Poverty and Trauma.

Addressing the root causes of institutional inequity is at the core of Groundcover's mission. We applied for operational funding to continue and grow our two main service programs: the Vendor Program, which provides opportunity for self-determined individuals to work in newspaper sales; and the Freelance Writing Program, which provides stipends and training for Vendors who are interested in writing for the paper (generating content). We also plan to use funds for mentorship and investment in equipment for Groundcover News vendors.

Some of the requirements to receive these funds are designed to grow the capacity of our organization. With support from the U-M School of Social Work Program Evaluation Group we will be conducting an equity self-assessment, writing an equity action plan and pursuing other activities to better evaluate our impact.

Receiving this grant is a huge deal for Groundcover. First, it is the largest grant we have received in our nearly 15 years of existence as a community-serving non-profit. The total award will be $40,000, to be distributed over two fiscal years. Second, it is a formal declaration of support from the leaders of this community in recognition of the impact we have made across Washtenaw County so far. It is also an investment in our future as a critical resource for all those facing the growing challenges of persistent poverty in this community. Grant applications were reviewed by a committee of vetted community volunteers with content expertise, community knowledge and/or lived experiences of inequity.

The other agencies awarded funding this year were Community Action Network, Laotian American Community of Michigan, Washtenaw Success by Six, Washtenaw Camp Placement, SOS Community Services, Michigan Medicine and The Women's Center of Southeast Michigan. We congratulate these organizations for the important contributions they have made in our County and look forward to working with them in the learning community provided by the County to assure accountability and effective stewardship of these funds. Thank you to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners for continuing this grant opportunity for the third year and your approval of this allocation to Groundcover.

Things have just kicked off. We will continue to update readers and supporters throughout the coming year.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY, **PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER** THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY, **PROMOTING AN ACTION** TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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1/2	$375.00	$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	$650.00	$900.00	10.25 X 13

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Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40%** off
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MEET YOUR VENDOR

Jim Clark, vendor No. 139

In one sentence who are you?
At first I thought I was no one going nowhere but it turns out I'm a force of nature.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover?
Wherever the truth needs to be told.

When and why did you start selling Groundcover? Technically 2013 but really got into it in 2019. Why? Because the pen is mightier than the sword.

What is one place in Ann Arbor that feels like your own personal sanctuary? Loaded question: My sanctuary is Hospitality House in Ypsilanti.

What is your life's motto?
Matthew 25:40

What advice would you give your younger self? At 23, you had it right. Eat, sleep and breathe anti-capitalism. Do not deviate from this path.

What is your comfort food?
Beets and cake.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things what would they be?
A helicopter, enough fuel to reach the mainland and an instruction manual on how to fly the helicopter.

If there was a theme song for your life what would it be? Stuck between "Running with the Devil" by Van Halen and "Wake Up" by Rage Against the Machine. Better to go with Rage for now.

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?
Markarian 231 — duh.

What is the weirdest food combo you swear by?
Mussels and vanilla pudding (without the mussels).

What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County? To be the first county in the United States to switch from capitalism to anarcho-syndicalism.

What's one question you wish you were asked more often? Do you know you are welcome to join us?

Park clean-up was a success!

On a hot and humid, Saturday morning in June, the "gang of five" (pictured above) met up in West Park to complete the commitment we made to clean up our parks. We were able to make new friends and enjoy making a difference! We hope to have many more encounters with the community. Good people of Ann Arbor, know we are here to stay and here to help anyway we can! — Wayne S.

Another history

ROBERTO ISLA CABALLERO
Groundcover vendor No. 347

What is the reality of being human?

The hidden power and the million-dollar fortune from slavery and foreign gangs.

In a world without pain and human sacrifice.

The continents were united but people put up walls and borders and ultimately divided our earth, the lone world and planet.

A stupid person completed the translation of our earth without thinking and without reality took only divisions like the Caribbean waters. They put other seas on the same level as the planets in the universe.

And with time, they only spend it making divisions with secret calls and maintaining the sacrifice of our ancestors but we gladly continue exercising our sicknesses, we do not attempt cures. With unfamiliar legends it is not known whether or not they are true. Ancient mariners, however, believed in the mermaid and the story of the sea.

En Espanol: Cual es la realidad del ser humano

El oculto poder y millonaria fortuna de la esclavitud y vanderas estrangeras

En un mundo sin dolor y sacrificio humano.

Cuando se unieron los continentes y pusieron muros y fronteras y al final dividieron nuestra tierra y un solo mundo y un planeta.

Un estupido llevo a cavo la traducción de nuestra tierra sin mente y sin realidad tomo solo divisiones como las aguas del caribes posioron otros mares al igual que los planetas en el universo

Ya que con el tiempo solo se la pasan haciendo divisiones con llamadas ocoktus mantienen el sacrificio de nuestros antepasados pero con ganas seguimos trabajando herfermos no tratamos curas. Con leyendas desconocidas no se sabe si fue cierto o no la mujer sirena los marineros sí cleyerón la historia de mar.

I Pledge Allegiance

SCOOP STEVENS
Groundcover contributor

I pledge allegiance to the United States Constitution and the republican form of government that it instituted.
One Nation under the Constitution.
At one time America was a good nation, She fought a Civil War to end slavery.
After the Civil War America's Constitution was subverted by domestic enemies.
The treasonous legislation was called the Power of the County Act.
The post-Reconstruction Congress empowered the Ku Klux Klan.
I pledge allegiance to the United States Constitution and the republican form of government that it instituted.

Non-English speakers in DC shelters suffer from lack of translation

FRANZISKA WILD
Street Sense DC

Please note: This article includes descriptions of sexual assault.

Kiara Meza, 24, a pregnant mother of two, crawled around on the floor in pain. She had tried to convince the staff at her city-funded youth housing program to call an ambulance, but they couldn't understand her and didn't find a way to translate, she said.

Meza, a Peruvian native, primarily speaks Spanish. She enjoys music, dreams of being an esthetician, and is a devoted mother. Since she arrived in DC a year ago, she's bounced from shelter to shelter. At most of them, she said, none of the staff spoke Spanish. The language barrier was often frustrating, but when she developed a severe kidney infection in January, it became dangerous.

"She never called the ambulance," Meza said of a staff member at the youth housing program that she was staying at, run by Covenant House, which is partially funded by the city. "I couldn't even stand up myself."

During the event, Meza said that staff at Covenant House did not attempt to use the city's Language Line to get a translator, even though city-funded services, including shelter and transitional housing programs, are mandated to be language accessible per the 2004 Language Access Act, and the city provides free access to translation through the Language Line.

According to Angela Jones Hackley, Covenant House's CEO, staff are trained on and instructed to use the Language Line as the "first and only mechanism". But that wasn't Meza's experience.

Eventually, Meza reached her bilingual caseworker at SMYAL, a youth homelessness service provider, who called an ambulance for her.

But Meza's story is not an isolated one. Language barriers in the DC shelter system have repeatedly caused harm to people experiencing homelessness, advocates and people with lived experience say, despite the existence of resources like Language Line. The consequences of language barriers can be grave: shelter seekers can be turned away, be taken advantage of, or experience abuse.

"Language access is a problem within every facet of the homelessness system," said Carmen Thorpe, a community navigator with District Bridges, a homelessness service provider. Thorpe, who is bilingual, works primarily with Latino and Spanish-speaking men who are experiencing homelessness in Mount Pleasant. "Even just meeting clients for the first time, they're so excited that someone can speak Spanish. It's an insurmountable barrier for a lot of them," she said.

In late April, Ruth Nivar, a former employee at the DC Department of Human Services (DHS), was sentenced to two years in federal prison for extorting non-English speakers applying for government assistance between 2018 and 2023, according to reporting from the Washington Post.

But despite the flags that may have been raised by Nivar's actions, extensive issues with language access persist across the homelessness services system, particularly in DHS-funded shelters, according to outreach workers who serve primarily non-English speaking clients.

Thorpe, as well as Andrés Meza (no relation to Kiara) and Sierra Barnedo, who are both caseworkers at SMYAL and primarily serve Spanish-speaking youth, said that most shelter and program staff are not bilingual and oftentimes are unable to communicate with their non-English speaking clients, despite government requirements.

Street Sense reporters conducted a language audit of low-barrier shelters that receive funding from DHS, mandating that they be language accessible. Journalists called the eight low-barrier shelters listed by DHS, as well as the shelter hotline. They identified themselves as journalists, in Spanish, before asking questions about language access.

When reporters called the shelter hotline, which is how most people seeking shelter would reach out to find out about available beds or request transportation, staff used the Language Line, an over-the-telephone interpretation service, to communicate. But when reporters called individual shelters to understand how front desk staff at these facilities might respond to non-English speakers after they had been referred via the hotline or entered the facility, they found that Language Line use and bilingual staff were scarce.

Only at one shelter — New York Avenue — did reporters reach a Spanish-speaking staff member, and only one shelter — Pat Handy — had a Spanish-speaking menu option.

At several other low-barrier shelters, including Adams Place, Harriet Tubman, Emery, and 801 East, staff hung up on reporters either immediately or after briefly saying that they didn't speak Spanish. When reporters asked about translation, staff did not attempt to call the Language Line or reach an interpreter. At one facility, staff indicated they would call back with a translator but never did. Reporters completed multiple rounds of calls at different times of day with consistent results.

According to a spokesperson from DHS, which oversees the shelters, all service providers are supposed to follow DC's language access laws, including training their staff on language access. The spokesperson did not respond to an extensive set of questions about language accessibility and Language Line use in shelters, but wrote, "DHS will continue to monitor providers' Language Access compliance and work to support providers in serving our customers."

The results of Street Sense's audit are consistent with Thorpe's experience of helping her clients to navigate city-funded low-barrier shelters and housing case management services. Out of Thorpe's caseload of 40 clients, only three have a Spanish-speaking case manager, she said.

"I always have to translate for them with DHS. Even though they have a language line, oftentimes the language line isn't even effective," Thorpe said. "The case managers that I'm working with, oftentimes they cannot speak Spanish, so it really puts the onus on me — without my facilitation, a lot of these folks would have fallen through the cracks."

Language barriers not only mean that non-English speakers reach housing or shelter more slowly, but they can also make navigating shelters and emergency housing unsafe.

Between January and April, Davyd Abreu was living at SHINE, a transitional housing program funded by DHS and run by Covenant House that offers case management and trauma-informed services for LGBTQ+ youth. Abreu, who is from Venezuela, is learning English, but his proficiency is still quite limited.

Abreu used a different name while at the SHINE program, but did not want to share that name publicly due to privacy concerns. Street Sense has verified his identity with extensive documentation, including text messages, police and incident reports, and photos.

At SHINE, Abreu said that staff treated him differently for being unable to speak English, and he felt that he could not advocate for himself or lodge any complaints because of the language barrier. Even simple requests like wanting different food options were difficult to communicate because SHINE staff relied on Google Translate, he said. From his perspective, it was "as if they don't have access" to the Language Line.

"I was never able to make a demand for food because the truth is, I don't know how to speak English, and it bothered them."

According to Jones Hackley, the Covenant House CEO, staff are trained to treat clients with respect, and instructed to use the approved interpretation services, including the Language Line.

"Our intent is to make sure that the youth that are able to access all the services we offer," she said. "We just retrained the staff; we can overtrain the staff. Our stance is that the language access line is the proper use. Google Translate is not the proper use; we don't use it as a mechanism as communicating with our youth."

But J, identified only by her first initial due to privacy concerns, had similar experiences to Abreu while at SHINE. She said that staff relied on Google Translate to communicate with

see **SPANISH** page 10 ➡

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Exile from State Street — part one

ROBBIE FEBRUARY
Groundcover contributor

I have lived in and around Washtenaw County since 1987. In 2022, I committed a series of crimes that led to my incarceration, first in jail and now prison, along with banishment from Washtenaw County until November 2042. During this time and for the rest of my life, I will make amends for my actions. I want to apologize to the victims of my crimes and to confirm I have recognized and modified my behavior.

I was first arrested in 2003. I had just turned 21, and I was enlisted in the United States Air Force. I was initially charged with desertion, a crime that is punishable by up to and including death; I had left my post at Sheppard Air Force Base to run away with a traveling carnival. I was placed in the Wichita County Jail in Texas prior to my day in court. I remember long nights feeling I had thrown my life away.

Thinking back on that period of incarceration, I would say I was scared straight. After my time in the Air Force, I was afraid of cops. I spent the next two decades without even getting a ticket for driving. I think my experience as a soldier led to me being a law-abiding citizen for a long time.

I wasn't aware of the machinery of criminal custody as I am today. I went through intake at another jail and was transferred to Wichita County to serve the rest of my sentence. I was released after 60 days and with a general, under honorable conditions, discharge.

Washtenaw County has a similar system of intake, transfer and release, which is known as the ITR. The ITR is the first and final incarceration phase in most cases that go in front of the magistrate in Washtenaw County.

An individual who is arrested in Washtenaw County can expect arraignment the following day, unless they are apprehended on a weekend. The holding cells in the ITR start to fill up on Friday afternoon and do not empty until Monday morning. This is the jail time that most people associate with minor crimes — the DUIs, domestic disturbances and shoplifting — alongside people who've committed more serious crimes. Meals are served at 7 a.m., noon and 5 p.m. every day. There is a phone in the unit, but most people don't use it.

A fellow inmate here in prison named Wild spent time in the Washtenaw County ITR on a few occasions. He offered some advice. "Always make that first call," he said. "Many people are scared of the judgment of loved ones, instead of judgment of the legal system." He remembered a few times where the officers on duty were very helpful in accommodating inmates. "The officers were very respectful. I was able to stay in street clothes and keep my earrings in," Wild stated. "They even gave me Benadryl to reduce sinus pressure and help me sleep."

Wild is a good person to know on the inside. He is always willing to share a story and a smile. His first stretch of time was in 2003 to 2004. He had received 45 days for contempt of court. He said, "I felt accused of driving under the influence by the prosecution. They said they smelled alcohol on my breath. The judge appeared persuaded by the arguments. I got mad and threw my boot at the judge. I literally had to go back to court and apologize for my behavior." Wild typically has an easy smile, but he related the story of his courtroom shenanigans with a level of sobriety. He's truly sorry for his actions.

A day after the incident, Wild was sent to K Block to complete the rest of his sentence. Back then, K block was for the general population. Nowadays, it is the trustees' dorm. Trustees are individuals who have special privileges in jail. I was never a trustee and can't write about the experience. Wild was not a trustee either. Trustees are mostly hand-picked inmates who serve food and clean up the floors and cells. They are typically people serving up to a year for non-violent misdemeanors. As felons, Wild and I were not chosen to be trustees.

There are approximately 12 cells in the ITR. There is the larger cell used as the "drunk tank" while people sober up. There are also several observation cells that are utilized when inmates are considered a danger to themselves or others. I spent a long weekend in one of these cells after I was picked up for making a public disturbance. This was a period of time during the winter of 2022 through 2023 when I was banned from both the Delonis Center and Purple House. When it was cold at night I kept moving. When I was arrested it was because I had nowhere else to go. When I was taken in I was placed in an observation cell. As a homeless veteran, I knew I could survive difficult situations. I was able to "embrace the suck." I did look forward to the warm meals and comfy mattresses during my first few times being arrested. It was better than I was experiencing on the outside.

Eventually, both Wild and I made it out of the ITR. I pled to a handful of charges and was moved to M Block to serve the remainder of my time. M Block is part of the new expansion of the Washtenaw County jail. There are two rows of four-person cells. The floor is covered with four-person tables, and there is a recreation area with a basketball hoop at the end. The whole area can house around 64 inmates and can get pretty crowded. It was here that I spent the bulk of my time. I wrote letters to friends and family to pass the time. There was often a game of cards or chess to be had.

Both Wild and myself have learned a lot during our time of incarceration and neither of us will return. Our time in Washtenaw County jail was important because it prevented either of us from doing more damage during reckless times in our lives. The more we talk, the more we get to know each other. It turned out that we had a lot of friends in common. It feels good to have a friend like Wild during my time in prison.

Wild has great intentions when he gets out. "I look forward to enjoying my sober life and being a role model to my 33 nieces and nephews." I feel confident that he will do very well on his second chance at freedom.

I too appreciate this time I've been given to make amends, and I will continue to utilize it to become a better person.

Drawing by Robbie February

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Youth social media use causing increase in mental health crises

WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

Mental health crises is a topic of discussion across communities — urban and rural. For more than a generation, mental health professionals and health-care providers have been urging younger and older Americans to seek help for their mental health needs. Social critics in print and broadcast media warned the nation about the benefits and risks of technological innovations such as "smartphones."

In my conversations with two college-aged students, Adara and Vic, they noted that the iPhone founder, Steve Jobs, knew that his smartphones are addictive and would not let his children use them for fear of the mental health consequences. Google's AI provides the following overview of social media use and mental health crisis:

"Social media use among children and adolescents has dramatically evolved with a significant increase in both access and frequency of use, particularly with the rise of smartphones. While social media can offer benefits like staying connected, it also presents potential risks, including cyberbullying, privacy concerns and negative impacts on mental health."

Research findings

During the Aspen Ideas Festival of 2024, a key session was organized called, "Teens and Screens: the Unabating Scourge of Social Media." There were five speakers. The set up for the presentation was profound and shocking. It said,

"American teenagers are facing a mental health crisis. 1 in 3 teen girls say they've considered suicide in the past year. Many young people, parents and mental health professionals point to social media as a main culprit. What does science say and what actions are being taken on the legal and regulatory front? And how can you protect your kids' emotional well-being?"

On April 14, 2023, Pew Research Center released a report titled, "Teens and Social Media: Key findings from Pew Research Center Surveys." The results were:

- The majority of teens report using Youtube, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat.
- TikTok use is more common among Black teens and teen girls.
- The majority of teens use Youtube and TikTok every day and some report using these sites almost constantly.
- More than half of teens say it would be difficult for them to give up social media.
- Teens are more likely to say social media has had negative effects on others than themselves.
- Teens are more likely to report positive than negative experiences in their social media use.
- When it comes to abuse on social media platforms, many teens think criminal charges or permanent bans would help a lot.
- Some teens — especially older girls — avoid posting certain things on social media because of fear of embarrassment or other reasons.
- Many teens do not feel like they are in the driver's seat when it comes to controlling what information social media companies collect about them.
- Only around one in five teens think their parents are highly worried about their use of social media.
- Nearly half of parents with teens (46%) are highly worried that their child could be exposed to explicit content on social media.

Finally, the 2024 Pew Research Center Survey of Parents and Teens (13-17) show that 55% of parents were extremely or very concerned about the mental health of teens while 35% of teenagers say that they were extremely or very concerned about their own mental health. Conversely, 11% of parents and 23% of teens say that they were not too/not at all concerned about teen mental health. The percent of U.S. teens who say that social media had negative effects on people their age was 48%; the percentage who say social media had positive effects was 11%.

We encourage our readers to view detailed information on this research report by Emily A. Vogel and Risa Gelles-Watnick of Pew Research Center.

Also, the Annie E. Casey Foundation points to the scientific evidence revealed in the 2023 U.S. Surgeon General's Report titled, "Social Media and Youth Mental Health Advisory." The key takeaways from the report, according to the Casey Foundation are:

- Teenagers' use of social media is widespread and pervasive.
- Social media use can benefit teens, but it can also be detrimental to a young user's health, leading to tech addiction, sleep deficits, increased levels of stress and more.
- Social norms and expectations, a fear of missing out, and a desire to connect with friends are some of the factors fueling social media among teens.
- Families, tech companies, policy makers and others must work together to create a safer and healthier social media environment for young people.

Proposed solutions

Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy's first advisory on loneliness and American mental health,

see **SOCIAL MEDIA** page 11

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www.ArtOnaJourney.gallery/Rachel

Family shelter is coming to the east side of the county

LINDSAY CALKA

There are more than 100 parents and children on Washtenaw County's family shelter waiting list. On top of that, eight to ten families in Washtenaw lose housing each week.

At the June 18 Continuum of Care meeting Shonaugh Taruza, executive director of Interfaith Hospitality Network at Alpha House, presented data and reflections from the 2024-2025 winter family sheltering programs. Surprisingly, she had an optimistic look to the upcoming season. This is because a new family shelter will be open on the east side of Washtenaw County by November of this year.

The new shelter will be located on Trinity Health Ann Arbor's main campus (located in Ypsilanti). The partially vacant building, which previously operated as a nursing home, will be converted into temporary housing for families. It offers 30 individual living units, each equipped with a private bathroom, which can accommodate up to four beds per unit.

Groundcover News has been covering the need for more family shelter since the Staples Family Center closed in 2021. At that time, Interfaith Hospitality Network at Alpha House's Jackson Road location only had capacity for six families. Other families, if able to access shelter, were being supported in hotel rooms funded by private dollars. In 2022 the Office of Community and Economic Development took on the family hotel program as a temporary band-aid to the homeless family crisis.

This past winter IHN at Alpha House responded to the growing local need by increasing capacity to 14 rooms at their Jackson Road site and renovating their basement for overflow. The basement was utilized for an overnight weather amnesty program from November to April. At its peak this past winter, in addition to the 14 rooms occupied by families of varying size, 55 people were sheltering at Alpha House.

Still, just like for single adults, different types of shelter spaces are necessary — there is no one-size-fits-all approach. "Family shelter" serves pregnant mothers, single parents or coupled parents with young children, multiple children, teenage children or children with disabilities. Last winter everybody had to be under one roof. Lessons from Taruza's presentation to the COC clearly stated the need for more space.

Alpha House at Trinity Health will primarily be for older and larger families, while the Jackson Road location will be prioritized for young and smaller families.

To strengthen the services at the Jackson Road location, Alpha House has applied for a state earmark grant supported by Senator Jeff Irwin and Commissioner Annie Somerville. Taruza elaborated, "If we get it, it will enable us to provide more support to young parents (18-24 years old) helping them with postpartum support, life skills training, mentoring, job and interview training. Since January 1, 2023, IHN Alpha House has supported 18 young parents or pregnant young adults through our program. Unfortunately, this tends to be primarily young, Black girls who have histories of abuse and trauma, and now find themselves having to raise a baby with very little, if any, support or guidance. Young parents need developmentally appropriate supports to succeed, resources that are not typically included in traditional shelter programs. By investing in these young families now, we hope we can create better outcomes for two generations — helping parents build stable futures while ensuring their children get a healthy, supported start in life."

The hospital will retain ownership of the building and land, while leasing the space for just $1 annually to Alpha House. The project was launched with a $1 million Legislative Enhancement

Grant from the State of Michigan's FY25 budget secured by Senator Jeff Irwin. Improvements to the building are estimated to be $2 million for upgrades to the plumbing and electrical systems, in addition to required roof, HVAC and elevator work. Taruza estimated IHN will need to hire at least ten additional staff members.

Trinity Health Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County are currently working with Alpha House and other community partners to secure these additional funds needed to support the facility upgrades and ongoing operations. A Trinity Health press release stated that philanthropic support from community members is also welcome (Trinity Health Southeast Michigan

see **FAMILY** page 8

Washtenaw County Community Mental Health
CALL FOR SUPPORT
and understanding
24/7 mental health and substance use support
734-544-3050
LEARN MORE about programs funded by the community mental health and public safety preservation millage.
PEER SUPPORT: Artie Tomlin, Valerie Bass, and Marti Schneider

A guide to dismantling capitalism

JIM CLARK

We are entrenched. Entrenched in a system of economics that we have become completely dependent on and which is destroying us at the same time. Many people are now beginning to understand that this system, that relies on making a profit at any cost, is no longer sustainable and has been unhealthy for a long time. People are beginning to wake up and see that the powerful elite — the billionaires, the politicians, the military and the religious right — have control of our lives down to the most intimate levels.

They control what we see, what we eat, how we live, what we believe is right and wrong, even how we love and express that love. People are beginning to understand that the powerful elite will not stop until they achieve global domination.

Once upon a time, to utter the phrase "global domination" conjured images of an evil genius wringing his hands while laughing maniacally as he reveals his insane scientific gadget that will enslave the human race, or annihilate it completely. The idea of robots taking over the world has been the stuff of science fiction for as long as we can remember; that day is already here.

At a time when the ability to keep up with the cost of living is becoming harder and harder, unskilled labor jobs are being eliminated and replaced by real live robots. The Lowebot "employed" by Lowe's is replacing customer service representatives. Walmart is following suit and is upping the ante with actual robot security. If that doesn't send chills down your spine, keep reading.

Boston Dynamics has advanced robot technology to the point that science fiction will begin having a hard time keeping up with reality. The robotic warehouse assistant "Stretch" is capable of lifting 50 lbs off the floor and putting it on a shelf six feet above it. They boast a battery life that lasts two shifts. It is already capable of eliminating a tremendous population of the workforce. AI that is capable of writing programs that will improve the functionality of itself has already begun. AI is already changing the face of education and is predicted to begin replacing white collar jobs in the very near future. "Accounts receivable" will probably be the first to go.

And yes, the military is developing both of these to become weapons. We saw their demonstration in the June 14th Flag Day Parade ordered by the President of the United States.

Although the Working Class is fatally dependent on capitalism, so are the rich. We must understand that all their wealth and power, whether generational or not, was accumulated at the expense of workers. As hard as the unions tried to keep them at bay, the economic might of the rich has overpowered the average worker's ability to fight back and keep the cost of living at a reasonable level. Food, rent and medicine prices continue rising faster than the minimum wage. In fact, working full time at the minimum wage with no benefits is not enough to meet the cost of living in most areas. As robotic and AI technologies continue to advance, this gap will widen faster and faster.

The poor are already being slowly choked to death by increasing poverty. Even the tried and true American patriotic worker — who pays their bills and taxes on time, who goes to work and works hard, the one who believes in the system — will soon realize they have been lied to for a long time.

Many workers are now employed by corporations that produce products they cannot afford on the wages they are paid. Who will buy the products? The rich will sell them to their own. Quality is already a defining feature of what is affordable and what is not. Look at the ingredient labels of something as simple as frozen pizza. The harder it is to pronounce the names of the chemicals in the food, the less expensive and less nutritious it is. It's bad enough that food is a commodity; it turns out that quality is also dependent on your income. The class war that people think is just left-wing extremist propaganda is becoming harder and harder to deny.

Whatever we do as the lower middle class on down to prepare ourselves for this widening gap we need to do now. "A Guide to Dismantling Capitalism" will explore ways to begin exiting from the capitalist system. This article is an introduction — and a call to action.

We must begin consciously and deliberately defying the system and status quo. It is as if our house has caught fire. The smoke is filling the living room and creeping up the stairs as we speak. While on the one hand, life goes on, the laundry needs to be done, the kids need to be fed, and so on, now is also the time to plan ahead for an economic collapse. One that the People will bring on by themselves.

The guide I am in the processing of writing will illustrate ways we can remove ourselves from this self-destructive path we are on in ways that are achievable, manageable, reasonable and with little discomfort.

We have had a taste of life-beyond-capitalism. In March 2020, the entire world turned off "the machine" for a few months. We only went to jobs that were deemed "essential." These were jobs that provided for food and medical care, and first responders. Even teachers were still at work, in-person or virtually. Banks and landlords (most of them) were told to suspend eviction procedures. All of these actions and more can be taken to cut the system off at its source. We can end capitalism. We lived without it for centuries before the industrial revolution. It has been said that "we will see the end of the world before we see the end of capitalism." Whoever said that was most likely rich or hopelessly poor. The truth is we can learn from history, we can learn from our mistakes, and we can envision a new future. We can, in fact, end capitalism.

Author's note: I am in the process of writing the guide and intend to publish more chapters in Groundcover News.

Boston Dynamics "Stretch" now commercially available.

➡ **FAMILY** from page 7

Office of Philanthropy at 734-712-4040).

"Our health system is built on a foundation of core values, which includes our strong support and service to those experiencing poverty, especially the most vulnerable," said Alonzo Lewis, president of Trinity Health Ann Arbor, Livingston, Oakland and Livonia. "By converting available space on our campus, we aim to help break the cycle of poverty and make a significant impact on the broader Washtenaw County community."

Wealthy, land-owning institutions should take note of this government-nonprofit partnership and model across other areas of shelter need.

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10:00 am In-person
and via Live Stream

Sudoku ★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

2		6		8				
7		9	4		2			
5	4				1			6
1	5							2
	7						1	
3							6	4
9			8				3	7
			7		6	1		8
				1		9		5

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling an issue more than 4 weeks old.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
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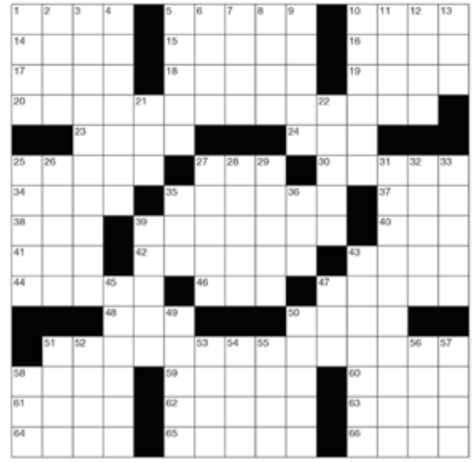
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code or leave positive review of a Vendor experience please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website. Thank you!

Woof!

Peter A. Collins



ACROSS

1. Feudal figure
5. Lures, with "in"
10. Old Testament book
14. Orchard unit
15. Curved piece of under-sink plumbing
16. Orderly
17. Like fine wine
18. Become one
19. Orderly
20. Chinese uprising around 1900
23. Graph lines
24. Like a burning candle
25. Appointed (to)
27. Investing options, briefly
30. Frank Sinatra classic
34. "The Art of Love" poet
35. Slow-motion exercise regimen
37. Chicken ___ king
38. Aykroyd of "The Blues Brothers"
39. Researcher's garb
40. London's Old ___ Theater
41. Fasten, in a way (but not loafers)
42. Loafers
43. "Little Women" sister
44. Bygone
46. Storm's center
47. Stupefy
48. ___ Moines, Iowa
50. Keister
51. "I'm So Excited" singers
58. Prepare laundry before washing
59. On the dot
60. Radar reading
61. Fairy tale start
62. It can be heavy or precious
63. Arm bone
64. With 66-Across, Iditarod big shots (and a hint to what 20-, 39-, and 51-Across all have)
65. Play segment
66. See 64-Across

DOWN

1. Sudden, sharp pain
2. Consequently
3. Took another look at
4. Overnighted, perhaps
5. San Antonio hoopsters
6. ___ Reader: bimonthly alternative magazine
7. House, casually
8. "Kiss Me, ___"
9. Be in a bee
10. Being
11. Number that resembles its last letter
12. Desert rarity
13. $$$ dispenser, for short
21. Roulette bet
22. Put a cap on
25. Greet from afar, in a way
26. Be useful
27. The "C" in CNN
28. Precarious
29. Make a point?
31. Greets from afar, in a way
32. O'Connor's Supreme Court successor
33. Luxury craft
35. Tiny amount
36. Adele's "Rumour ___ It"
39. Sheets or pillowcases
43. Closest pal
45. Made a long story short, maybe?
47. Urban transportation
49. Plant parts
50. Duke, for one
51. Cornmeal creation
52. Black-and-white ocean predator
53. Company V.I.P.
54. Give stars
55. Car radio button
56. Saturn feature
57. Health clubs
58. Note between fa and la

Reimagining Walden, a loathing

ANTHONY SMITH
Groundcover contributor

A few years back during COVID I had the unfortunate luck of getting what I thought was a good job doing plumbing and electric as a contractor in sunny Brighton, Michigan. I found the job on Craigslist after I had an issue at Lowe's because I couldn't furnish I-9 documents such as a social security card or a birth certificate. What I did have was a voter registration card and an ID; documents were being stored at a buddy's place who had headed for the hills in order to avoid new-world-order checkpoints. However, it meant zero pay for me because the smooth brain jerks at Lowe's wouldn't take my registration card — but in order to vote one must be a citizen unless one happens to be an immigrant in places like New York or California. This was lost on nice people at Lowe's.

Not to be deterred by mere tax-cattle BS, I got off my high horse and found a job on Craigslist. I lost my home in Hartland, ended up in jail a few times and needed a better place to stay. In my humble Jeep Liberty, my legs had developed severe blood clots nearly concealing my ankles; I risked my swollen legs because of the upright position I was sleeping in. Back then my life hadn't been totally violated by a system — between lame jobs and my family, I still owned a few things. I was living high on the hog with my five or six pairs of pants and my other personal items in storage.

The first few weeks of the electrical and plumbing job were great. I busted ass, my employer was full of praise and I was able to afford a room at the Hartland Best Western. My legs healed and I had a decent continental breakfast every day — it was pretty good for a one-horse town. A Smooth Operator can slide into these places during the morning peak rush hours and eat for free just so long as one looks the part of the clean, well-rested travelers. I've done this countless times as well as sleeping in U-Hauls which are seldom locked.

Being homeless outside of the big city is way different from the risks of the urban environment. Living deliberately in nature is cool, but what does one do when the Windigo* comes calling? Don't respond? If a familiar voice calls your name, say nothing in response, especially if no one should know where you are deep in the woods. It happened to me once.

The Best Western was $100 a night and more on the weekend. It didn't matter to me — I had ankles again, my legs were healing and I had money left over for minor luxuries like dinner, gas and smokes. About two weeks into my job, my boss asked me what I was paying for my hotel room. "$100-120," I said, "not much, but most of what I earn every day."

"You can sleep on my couch for a lot less than that, you just gotta buy your own food and do some dishes," he offered. This sounded great because I was saving most of what I earned for Best Western. I didn't have many options during that very weird time. I thought at the time that it was an experience, an opportunity and I was very optimistic. The huge statue of Baphomet (a Satanic symbol of the occult) in his backyard should have been a red flag.

The first week or two were okay, then slowly things started to get funny. He would say how great we were doing. I was taken out to a 12-acre parcel of land in Cahopka there. I set up a modest marijuana grow operation of a little bit more than 100 plants; he promised me free reign on the property to grow whatever I wanted. It was not to be, however, and the fruits of all of my hard work were later taken from me.

It was after about a month or so of living there that I became acquainted with the neighbor across the street. He was an old Indian who told me to be careful because he had seen Scott (boss) cheat people many times. The old Indian was a character in his own right. He lived alone with ill-tempered dogs and drank constantly in his home, had only electricity, no running water or gas. He got his drinking water with scavenged garden hoses deployed across the neighborhood, and the water with which he occasionally bathed and flushed the toilet was gathered with an elaborate system that caught rainwater and funneled it into a food safe barrel with a spigot on it.

The inside of his home was adorned with many skulls and an assortment of swords, knives, axes and spears, like some kind of trailer park witch doctor. I spent many nights there after work drinking whiskey by the fire out back. Accompanied by an army of bats above and his two ill-tempered dogs below, during these times, he would tell me stories about contacting dark spirits with his ouija board and hunting iguanas as a kid in the jungle, and oh, that time he accidentally got kicked out of the Marine Corps for stealing a bomb. He would always say, "Be sure and watch Scotty." I did, and some stuff began to get funny. It wasn't enough to jump ship, and given the situation at the time, I couldn't jump ship anyway.

TO BE CONTINUED...

*The Windigo (or Wendigo), associated with winter, is a cannibalistic monster that preys on the weak and socially disconnected, and is found in some indigenous American tales.

➡ **SPANISH** from page 4

her, which meant that it was difficult for her to explain her unique needs as a transgender woman.

Abreu was still at SHINE in February. That month, he had an accident and broke his leg. The evening that he was released from the hospital back to SHINE, another program member attempted to rape him. Abreu said that he tried to communicate what was happening to shelter staff, but according to him and Andrés Meza, staff refused to call MPD and made no attempt to use the Language Line.

Instead, as photos Abreu took of a staff member's phone and shared with Street Sense show, staff Google translated instructions, telling Abreu: "We just moved him from his room, you can go back," referring to the alleged assailant.

"I called Andrés. He usually never answers me at night because it is not during his work hours," Abreu said. "But by the grace of god, he answered me, and I told him to call the police, to call me the ambulance."

Street Sense obtained a copy of the DHS unusual incident report filed by SHINE, which aligns with Abreu's account of the attempted rape. It notes, "Due to some language barriers [DA] was on the phone with a case manager from SMYLE and that case manager unbeknown to CHDC called MPD and reported a sexual assault occurred at the Shine facility."

While Jones Hackley could not speak to the specific incident, she said that Covenant House is cooperating with the police. Andrés Meza said that Covenant House did not offer any "supportive services", such as legal help or therapy, after the incident.

Moving forward, Jones Hackley said, Covenant House would "make sure we go back and retrain and re-communicate with our staff as well as our values when serving youth."

"We want all young people to feel welcome when they walk through our doors, and we follow all District laws," she said.

Following the incident, Abreu began to take steps to exit the SHINE program. He now lives in SMYAL-provided housing, which has its own challenges — he doesn't get along with some of the other young people he lives with — but, he said, at least he's able to express himself.

Currently, he is focused on healing from his accident to feel more settled and in control of his life. But he underscored his belief that the city needs to improve language access in homelessness services so that everyone can be understood.

"There are a lot of people who are just trying to live life, and find resources, and oftentimes they can't find any help because of the language barrier," he said.

Graham Krewinghaus and Cody Slutzky contributed reporting and translation. Quotes from Kiara Meza, J, and Davyd Abreu were translated from Spanish. Courtesy of Street Sense / INSP

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

2	1	6	3	8	5	4	7	9
7	8	9	4	6	2	3	5	1
5	4	3	9	7	1	2	8	6
1	5	4	6	3	8	7	9	2
6	7	2	5	4	9	8	1	3
3	9	8	1	2	7	5	6	4
9	2	1	8	5	4	6	3	7
4	3	5	7	9	6	1	2	8
8	6	7	2	1	3	9	4	5

➡ **SOCIAL MEDIA** from page 6

which included youth mental health and social media, was published in 2021 (the second year of the COVID-19 global pandemic) before he took office. That report talked about the impact of the pandemic on social media and technology use and increased loneliness caused by the quarantine. People believe that the long-term effects of that isolation are still being felt today. His first advisory report as the U.S. Surgeon General was written in late 2024 and published in February 2025. The title is, "Social Media and Youth Mental Health." Earlier this year, Dr. Murthy published a book titled "Togetherness." In it, Murthy talks about loneliness, social isolation and mental health consequences such as anxiety and depression.

In his recent appearance on the NBC Sunday show, "Meet the Press," Murthy lamented what he observed in some colleges he visited. For instance, he visited the dining hall of a college and it was very quiet. He looked around and saw many people using their smartphones and only very few people engaging in direct face-to-face conversations. He also visited other college settings to talk to students in order to gain more understanding about the benefits and risks of social media use. Those college visits and discussions with various stakeholders led to the February 2025 advisory which highlighted the issues of mental health crisis among young Americans.

We have looked at several proposed solutions to the social media and youth mental health crisis, including the recommendations published by the NIH Library of Medicine. A more compelling set of solutions than the NIH information is contained in Dr. Murthy's advisory on social media and youth mental health of February 2025. It recommended "ways to act based on your role." For example, it provided different sections on what children and adolescents, parents and caregivers, technology companies, policymakers and researchers can do.

What children and adolescents can do:

1. Reach out for help. If you or someone you know is being negatively affected by social media, reach out to a trusted friend or adult for help. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, call or text 988 for immediate help.

2. Create boundaries to help balance online with offline activities.

3. Develop protective strategies and healthy practices for your own social media use. See "Tip Sheet on Social Media use and Mental Health" for and by young people.

4. Be selective about what you post and share online and with whom, as it is often public and can be stored permanently.

5. Protect yourself and others from cyberbullying or other forms of online harassment and abuse:

a. If you or someone you know is the victim of cyberbullying or other forms of online harassment and abuse, don't keep it secret.

b. Protect others by not taking part in online harassment or abuse. Avoid forwarding or sharing mean messages or images, tell others to stop, and report offensive content.

What parents and caregivers can do:

1. Create a family media plan to help establish healthy technology boundaries at home — including social media use. For information on creating a family media plan, visit www.healthychildren.org/English/Fmp/Pages/MediaPlan

2. Create tech-free zones and encourage children and adolescents to foster in-person friendships.

3. Model responsible social media behavior.

4. Teach children and adolescents about technology and empower them to be responsible online participants at the appropriate age.

5. Report cyberbullying and online abuse and exploitation.

6. Work with other parents to help establish shared norms and practices and to support programs and policies around healthy social media use.

Dr. Vivek Murthy, Former U.S. Surgeon General

Above all, Dr. Murthy wants us to start a national conversation in our various communities. Here are some questions that could be included in such conversations:

What have we learned about social media and youth mental health crisis in our local area? What are the specific mental issues? Loneliness? Anxiety? Depression? Suicidal ideation?

What are the public school systems doing to make things better?

What do the teenagers want?

What can the community do to help make the youth happier?

WASHTENAW COUNTY SUMMER COOLING SITES

For more information, like hours of operation, visit bit.ly/Wash-Cooling

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Collaborative solutions for a promising future

Last updated May, 2025

Location	Address	Phone #
Ann Arbor District Library (Downtown)	343 S. 5th Ave., Ann Arbor	734-327-4200
Ann Arbor District Library (Mallets Creek)	3090 E. Eisenhower Parkway, Ann Arbor	734-327-4200
Ann Arbor District Library (Pittsfield)	2359 Oak Valley Dr., Ann Arbor	734-327-4200
Ann Arbor District Library (Traverwood)	3333 Traverwood Dr., Ann Arbor	734-327-4200
Ann Arbor District Library (Westgate)	2503 Jackson Ave., Ann Arbor	734-327-4200
Briarwood Mall	100 Briarwood Cir., Ann Arbor	734-761-9550
Chelsea Library	221 S. Main St., Chelsea	734-475-8732
Dexter Library	3255 Alpine St., Dexter	734-426-4477
Manchester Library	912 City Rd. (M-52), Manchester	734-428-8045
Milan Library	151 Wabash St., Milan	734-439-1240
Northville Library	212 W. Cady St., Northville	248-349-3020
Saline Library	555 N. Maple Rd., Saline	734-429-5450
Salem-South Lyon Library	9800 Pontiac Trail, South Lyon	248-437-6431
Washtenaw County Human Services Building	555 Towner, Ypsilanti	734-544-6700
Ypsilanti District Library (Superior)	1900 Harris Rd., Ypsilanti	734-482-4110
Ypsilanti District Library (Whittaker)	5577 Whittaker Rd., Ypsilanti	734-482-4110
Ypsilanti District Library (Downtown)	229 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti	734-482-4110

Creamy coconut-lime rice

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
U-M student contributor

Ingredients:
1 cup uncooked jasmine rice, rinsed
1 (13-14 oz) can coconut milk
1(1½-inch) piece fresh ginger
2 large garlic cloves
2 limes
2/3 cup roasted and salted peanuts, finely chopped
2 T. peanut butter
1 t. granulated sugar
2 t. sambal oelek (a bit more is fine)
2 cups ripe cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup roughly chopped cilantro

Directions:

Cook the rice according to the packaging instructions until tender, replacing 1¼ cups of the cooking water with 1¼ cups of the coconut milk.

While the rice is cooking, add ¼ cup coconut milk to another bowl. Finely grate the ginger and garlic into the bowl, followed by the zest of 1 lime. Juice both limes into the bowl. Whisk in 1/3 cup of the peanuts, the peanut butter, sugar and sambal and season with salt.

Fluff the cooked rice with a fork, transfer to a serving bowl and season with salt and pepper, allow to cool slightly. When ready to serve, add the tomatoes and ¾ cup of the herb to the bowl with the rice. Pour in the coconut dressing, toss well to coat, season with pepper and top with remaining 2/3 cup crushed peanuts and ¼ cup herbs. For the best flavor, serve at room temperature the day it's made.

GROUNDCOVER CLASSIFIEDS

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NO questions asked. REWARD $20-$50 for it's return IF in GOOD condition. Please bring bike to Arborland Kroger (where MISSING from) or Chili's, or to Groundcover News office.

Please arrange meeting time and details or leave bike with Chili's or Kroger management. Can call Bill via Chili's at (517) 219-5961 or Lindsay from Groundcover News at (734) 263-2098.

For details of drop off-pick up, bike owner may be DIRECTLY REACHED via (734) 579-6554. Witnesses please call A2 police dept, Case #25-30222

BLESSINGS and PEACE from JESUS!

CAREGIVER NEEDED ~ Job is for 5 days a week – 5 hours per day – Salary is $40 per hour. For more details about the position, email me (ricmondcole49@gmail.com).

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